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THE IDEA OF UNIVERSAL PEACE IN THE WORKS OF VIRGIL AND DANTE

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Men have dreamed of universal peace long before the dawn of the twentieth century; and Jewish prophets and pagan writers, no less than Christians, have looked forward to the day when war shall cease. Poets and philosophers have been unconsciously forwarding the peace movement for hundreds of years; and when international amity shall be not only an ideal but a fact, to them, as well as to statesmen and philanthropists, will the honor be due.

Captains and conquerors leave a little dust
And Kings a dubious legend of their reign;
The swords of Caesar, they are less than rust;
The poet doth remain.

Although the temptation is always strong to read into the records of past years ideas and motives that may not have had such potent force as we would ascribe to them, it is a fascinating and by no means a fruitless task to trace the evolution of national and even international, ideals, and to consider how concerned have been some of the greatest minds of the past with the solution of what are truly perennial difficulties. Upon such a question as that of international peace, the men of the first and of the fourteenth centuries would look from entirely different angles, because not only political theories but political conditions were so unlike those which prevail today; but after all it is largely in the nonessentials that men differ, and the end to be attained is much the same, however the means have varied. Virgil would not have understood the need for international arbitration, since Rome alone could be for him the mistress of the world. Dante would subordinate the nations to the sway of the Holy Roman Empire, ordained of God to give to the world peace. But it is short-sighted and narrow criticism that would pass by the contributions which these great souls made to the idea

of international peace with a supercilious comment on their limitations. Assuredly it would not be uninteresting to know what conceptions of world-peace were held by these two poets to one of whom we turn instinctively for the best expression of the ideals of the Roman world, and the other of whom sums up in himself the finest thinking of the Middle Ages.

It is hardly more than a platitude to say that Virgil was by nature a lover of peace. His biographers have pictured him as a gentle, lovable man, somewhat frail of health, of a rustic simplicity of mien. Born in 70 B.C., he grew to manhood in those troublous days which preceded the founding of the empire; and he knew at first hand of the horrors of civil strife. In the hundred years from 133 to 31, Italy had seen twelve civil wars and had been drained again and again of her best blood. Abroad there had been rapine and fraud and continual oppression of the provinces; at home there had been the barbarous proscriptions, insecurity of property and of life, and unprecedented bloodshed. In the country, even more than at Rome, the woeful ravage and the awful waste of contest after contest had been felt; and Virgil, like many of his neighbors, had experienced the desolation wrought by military confiscations. The advent of the empire, however, not only meant a respite from civil strife but held out the hope of a universal peace; even in his earliest works the poet believes that Rome is entering on a new and highly auspicious era.

It has often been pointed out that one of the peculiar charms of the *Eclogues* is that they picture the contrast between the happiness of life in the ideal Arcadia of the poet's imagination and the abiding misery and unrest of the actual world. The philosophy of these poems is a retreat from struggle and a shelter from strife in beautiful woods and meadows. Occasionally, as in the first eclogue, there are veiled allusions to contemporary events and to the horrors of the civil wars; now and then, as in the tribute to the conqueror Pollio at the opening of the eighth eclogue, the poet hints of the glories of war. But the tone of the poems as a whole is placid and lovely. The Cynthian god demurred when the poet would sing of kings and battles.

Namque super tibi erunt qui dicere laudes,
Vare, tuas cupiant et tristia condere bella (vi. 6, 7).

"There will be enough poets, O Varus, who would wish to sing thy praises and commemorate wars that are dreadful."

The fondness for quiet and for the repose of Nature, the love of home and of the simpler virtues, are not the only indications which the *Eclogues* afford of Virgil's attitude toward peace; in the wonderful fourth eclogue, he prophesies the return of the Golden Age and the cessation of all war. The subject of the poem is two-fold: the coming of a new era and the birth of a particular child. Upon the child at birth, earth lavishes princely gifts. When he is old enough to read, Nature is to double her bounty; but there will still remain among men a few traces of ancient evil. There will still be wars on earth. Another Argo is again to carry chosen heroes; the great Achilles will go a second time to Troy. But when the child becomes a man, mankind will have learned to accept earth's bounty. There will be no more trading, no more farming; the sheep themselves will be clothed in vari-colored wool. Hard labor will cease; peace and justice will return to man. The boy, now grown to man's estate, will govern a world at peace; all remaining traces of national guilt will be done away; the world will be released from perpetual fear.

Virgil's desire for peace is through the very nature of this poem formulated in general and rather vague terms; and yet the attitude is thoroughly Roman. The new ruler is to govern the world that has been thoroughly pacified: *orbem pacatum*; and in the adjective there is the note of haughty imperialism. There is, to be sure, evidence that Virgil believed that the change was to come gradually; but it was to include not only the abolition of war but the cessation of trade and agriculture. Small wonder is it, then, that the fourth eclogue, beautiful as it is, by no means represents Virgil's final word, nor his best thinking. By it peace was to be superimposed upon an expectant world; mankind was to accept the Golden Age, not to work it out. As men grow older, and know more about human life, they are less and less ready to predict the speedy return of the Golden Age. Like many another youthful poet, Virgil at first contented himself with prophesying peace; but it was not long before he knew that there was something far greater than what has been called his "millennium resplendent with purple and saffron rams."

That the new age of peace which Virgil dreamed of in the *Eclogues* could not be given to the world by Rome unless she were strong and prosperous Virgil was well aware. No nation can be an effective agent for ruling the world unless it shows domestic industry. Virgil shared the imperial ambitions of Augustus. He knew that Rome could not flourish unless Italy was strong and fertile; and therefore he gave seven years of his life to his great national poem on the peaceful art of agriculture. It was a subject appropriate to his genius. "Virgil," wrote Francis Bacon, "got as much glory of eloquence, wit, and learning in the expression of the arts of husbandry as of the heroical acts of Aeneas." And it is because Virgil sees the importance of agriculture for the prosperity of Rome and the importance of peace for the proper pursuit of agriculture that he dwells now and then on the horrors of war. At the close of the first Georgic he expresses his wonder that the powers above did not think it wrong that the best blood of Rome should fatten the land of Emathia and Haemus' broad plains; and in somewhat of the same vein which marks Southey's poem on Blenheim he pictures the Italian farmer, sometime in the distant future, with the curved plow upturning Roman javelins, or striking empty helmets with his heavy rake, and gazing astounded on the gigantic bones that start from their broken sepulchers.

"But what they fought each other for
I could not well make out.
But every body said," quoth he,
"That 'twas a famous victory."

In a strain not unlike this the first Georgic ends. The poet speaks of the heavens complaining that it must regard the triumphs of men in a world where right and wrong are confounded, where wars abound, and where swarm myriad forms of crime, where the plow meets with none of its due honor, where the tiller of the soil is swept off, the land left to weeds, and the hook has its curve straightened into the sword blade; "for the unhallowed fury of Mars rages the wide world through." As the antithesis to this vigorous passage on the ravages of war, near the end of the second Georgic in the famous panegyric on the good fortune of the farmer, Virgil sings the praises of a simple society that delighted in hus-

bandry. "Nay, in days before the Cretan king, before our race in its impiety began to regale itself on slaughtered bullocks, this was the life led on earth by Saturn, monarch of the Golden Age, days when the blast of the trumpet and the hammering of the sword on the stubborn anvil were sounds unknown." And the whole point of the *Georgics* is missed, if it is not seen that Virgil believes that his ideal may really be attained by man; that indeed it had been attained when each Roman citizen cultivated his own land, and that it will be attained again in the future if enough Romans will only return to the farm and content themselves with the blessings of peace.

In the *Eclogues*, the dreamer, full of youthful sentiment, sings of what the world will be when the years have passed away; in the *Georgics*, the poet of Italy pictures the glories of the peaceful art of agriculture and shows how his country may refresh her strength. It remains to be considered how the poet laureate of Rome conceives the mission of the empire to be the promotion of civilization and the imposing of peace upon all the nations of the world.

It is nowadays hardly necessary to point out that the *Aeneid* is more than a heroic poem on war. Indeed much modern criticism goes too far in emphasizing the gentler side of Virgil and in slighting the virility of his genius. But like many other strong minds, both in past ages and today, Virgil's whole nature was on the side of peace. It may be an overstatement to assert that in the *Aeneid* "each hero dies lamented or lamenting"; yet it is certain that Virgil's sympathy goes out again and again to the victims of cruel Mars. Like Addison in the *Campaign*, he would cry,

How can I see the gay, the brave, the young
Fall in the cloud of war and lie unsung?

What reader of the *Aeneid* does not remember young Menoetes, slain by Turnus, the type of the peasant who suffers most in war:

Who hated war (though vainly) when he plied
His native fisher-craft in Lerna's streams
Where from his mean abode he ne'er went forth
To wait at great men's doors, but with his sire
Reaped the scant harvest of a rented glebe;¹

¹I use the translation of T. C. Williams.

or Antores, pierced by a wound meant for another, who lay

Ill-fated! looking upward to the light
And dreaming of dear Argos as he died;

or the boy-prince Pallas on his rustic bier,

. . . the youthful dead,
Like fairest flower by virgin fingers culled,
Frail violet or hyacinth forlorn,
Of color still undimmed and leaf unmarred;
But from the breast of mother earth no more
Its life doth feed.

Yet this pity for the death of the young and the loss of the brave does not come from one who is weak and effeminate. Like Tennyson, Virgil was fond of depicting the pomp and circumstance of war; he was proud of the martial exploits of his race. But however much he may praise individual valor, in the last six books there are many indications that he believes warfare ought not to be, that war is the impious way of settling disputes. It is the fiery Alecto from hell who stirs up strife between the Rutulians and the Trojans. Aeneas again and again feels the injustice of it all. When he kills the youthful Lausus, he calls him "Unhappy boy!" and groans aloud in pity, as he

Beheld the agonizing lips and brow
So wondrous white in death.

Nor should it be forgotten that the closing lines of the *Aeneid* on the death of Turnus incorporate the inevitable protest of man against the cruelty of war.

ast illi solvuntur frigore membra
Vitaque cum gemitu fugit *indignata* sub umbras.

The failing limbs
Sank cold and helpless; and the vital breath
With moan of wrath to darkness fled away.

Yet it is the fundamental conception of the *Aeneid* that out of the mystery of this injustice and sacrifice is to come the great state that is to give the world civilization and peace. If Virgil sometimes calls war abominable, savage, impious; if he pictures Death-dealing War as ever at the doors of Hell, next to the iron bed of the Furies and near wild-eyed Strife, he does not regard the Roman state as

responsible for employing it in conquests: there is nothing of the note which William Vaughn Moody utters in his "Ode on a Soldier Fallen in the Philippines":

Praise, and never a whispered word but the fight he fought was good,
Never a word that the blood on his sword was his country's own heart blood.

No: Virgil seems to regard war as the necessary means to attain the desired end; nor does he hint that it is soon to cease. But he points out and emphasizes the fact that the mission of Rome is to rule the world in peace. Indeed a new age of justice and of concord among the nations could not help being a favorite ideal of the poet who celebrates the old traditions of the mingling of the Trojan and the Latin tribes. Of this new era Virgil often sings. The speech of Jupiter in the first book of the *Aeneid* promises that in the reign of Augustus

Will the world grow mild: the battle-sound
Will be forgot. . . . The dreadful gates
Whence issued war shall with close jointed steel
Be barred impregnably.

But yet this is to come to pass only after Greece has been conquered, Rome sits supreme over prostrate Argos, and Julius Caesar has bounded his power by the ocean and his fame by the stars. Similarly in the ninth book Apollo praises the first martial exploits of Ascanius only to predict final peace.

Hail to thy maiden prowess, boy! This way
The starward path to dwelling place divine.
O sired of gods and sire of gods to come
All future storms of war by fate ordained
Shall into peace and lawful calm subside
Beneath the offspring of Assaracus.

The lines devoted to the praise of Augustus in the sixth book of the *Aeneid* hold that his great glory is the return of the Golden Age; and Anchises urges Julius Caesar, the greatest of conquerors, to forbear from civil war and practice mercy.

But be thou first, O first in Mercy! thou
Who art of birth Olympian! Fling away
Thy glorious sword, mine offspring and mine heir!

In the famous passage on Marcellus, very few readers recall that the lines describe a brave and impetuous soldier.

O brave right arm invincible! What foe
Had 'scaped his onset in the shock of arms,
Whether on foot he strode, or if he spurred
The hot flanks of his war-horse flecked with foam?

but everyone remembers the tribute to the dead youth,

O bring me lilies! Bring with liberal hand!
Sad purple blossoms let me throw—the shade
Of my own kin to honor, heaping high
My gifts upon his grave! So let me pay
An unavailing vow!

So is it, too, when Virgil looks beyond Rome and beyond Romans. In the beautiful lines which express the deepest spiritual aspirations of the Roman for a future life which somehow and somewhere redresses the wavering scales of human justice, in the bright Elysian fields, faithful warriors who have endured wounds fighting for the fatherland are first and most fittingly mentioned. Then come the holy priests and inspired poets and at the climax of the passage those who exemplify the virtues of peace:

All who found
New arts to make man's life more blest and fair
Yea! here dwell all those dead whose deeds bequeath
Deserved and grateful memory to their kind.

Virgil's vision is distinctly a *pax Romana*. The great genius of the Roman is to conquer and to govern. Like the haughty imperialist that he was, he saw to it that other nations accepted his sway and his ideas. In the lines in which Virgil sums up the characteristics of the Roman race, there is a phrase which is the key to the whole matter: *pacis imponere mores*. The Roman is to impose peace, his peace, on the nations. But the *toga*, and not the *pilum* nor even the eagle is the ultimate symbol: the Roman in his garb of peace is to rule the world. Virgil gives no hint of voluntary federation of nations; the world must be governed by Rome. To him Rome is the most beautiful city, the most beautiful idea in the world.

Scilicet et rerum facta est pulcherrima Roma.

Earth hath not any thing to show more fair.

And Virgil believes that after many a conflict and war, after much mysterious shedding of blood and treasure, the Golden Age will be born anew; wars will cease; and under the firm and righteous sway of Rome, the arts of peace will rise to greater and greater heights.

For a time it seemed as if Virgil's dream for Rome might come true. The empire was extended to cover the greater part of the civilized world: all roads led to Rome. And even after the barbarian hosts had come flooding into Italy, Virgil's idea seemed to survive in the Holy Roman Empire. Then, too, the Christian church through the marvelous instrument of the Papacy was another important factor for the unity of the nations. With both these institutions Dante was much concerned, not only in the *Divine Comedy*, but also and especially in the *De monarchia*, one of the most interesting Latin essays which the Middle Ages afford.

The *De monarchia* is a plea for the necessity of a universal empire which shall be independent of the church. To understand its main points, certain facts about Italy at the opening of the fourteenth century must be recalled. Again, as in the first century before Christ, the land was wet with bloodshed. The two parties of Guelphs and Ghibellines were in constant strife. In 1260, ten thousand dead were left upon the plain of Arbia, and at Campaldino in 1289 there was a similar slaughter. Dante gives the following picture of his war-laden country:

Ah slavish Italy! thou inn of grief
Vessel without a pilot in the storm!
. . . . thy living ones
In thee abide not without war, and one
Relentless gnaws another, ay of those
Whom the same wall and the same moat contains.
Seek, wretched one! Around thy sea-coasts wide,
Then homeward to thy bosom turn, and mark
If any part of thee sweet peace enjoy.

Like Virgil, Dante had hard experience of war. Indeed he had taken part in battle, if we are to credit the words of an apocryphal letter: "At Campaldino I proved myself no novice in arms and at first was filled with dismay, and afterwards with deep exaltation at the varying fortunes of the battle." Whatever Dante has to say, therefore, about peace are not the words of a weak visionary.

Virgil was Dante's favorite poet; and although it is impossible to assert that much of Dante's political theory comes from his literary teacher and guide, it is clear that the study of classical authors and particularly of Virgil would call up glorious visions of the old Roman state and urge him to strive in behalf of the Holy Roman Empire. Even before the poet had given in his lot with the Ghibellines who supported the claims of the emperor against the Guelphs who upheld the temporal sovereignty of the pope, he had asserted that the world was in need of a universal empire in order that it might have universal peace. The *Convivio*, written about the year 1300, contains the following passage:

Since the human mind cannot rest content with possession of limited territory but is stimulated by an everlasting love of glory, it follows of necessity that wars and conflicts will arise between different countries . . . and thus the general happiness is marred. Wherefore, to put an end to wars and to the source of wars, it is necessary that the whole earth . . . should form a monarchy or single empire, and that it should be governed by a single emperor who, as he already possesses all things, and has nothing further to acquire, will compel the various kings to remain content within the boundaries of their several kingdoms, and will preserve peace among them. . . . Thus we see that in a ship, while each of the sailors devotes himself to his own special duty, there is one who superintends their united labors and directs them to a common purpose.

These words, written by Dante only a few years after his exile, reveal his earlier political opinions. As he brooded over the wrongs that drove him forever from his beloved Florence, he became more and more convinced that not only they, but many other ills from which Italy suffered, were due to the inordinate desire of the Papacy for temporal power.

The church of Rome,
Mixing two governments that ill assort,
Hath miss'd her footing, fallen into the mire,
And there herself and burden much defiled.

To Dante's mind this was the reason that the growth of a universal empire was blighted, and the cause of universal peace hindered. Filled with such thoughts, he wrote his Latin treatise *De monarchia* to prove that a universal empire is necessary for the well-being of the world, that it is the birthright of the Roman

people, and that its authority comes, not through the hands of the pope, but directly from God. In many ways the essay is typical of the early fourteenth century; it is mediaeval in style and scholastic in thought. The Latin is straightforward and clear, although it lacks the grace which distinguishes the Latin works of Petrarch and the ease and natural vigor which mark the letters of Erasmus. As in most works of the Middle Ages, Latin writers are quoted side by side with the books of the Bible, and their authority is hardly ever questioned. Dante cites Virgil constantly; he is *divinus poeta noster*; and the *Aeneid* is almost a sacred book. Aristotle's *venerabilis auctoritas* is for the most part regarded as decisive. But curious as the lack of critical discrimination may seem to us, and annoying as the scholastic, hair-splitting logic often becomes, now and then Dante's earnestness and deep convictions burst forth into passages that show the poet of the *Divine Comedy*.

At the very outset in terms that are re-echoed in some of our leading journals today, Dante states his thesis that the highest happiness of man lies in intellectual activity; and that intellectual activity is possible only in times of peace.

Whence it is evident [he writes] that universal peace is the greatest and best means ordained for our beatitude. Hence it is that when of old the glad tidings from heaven sounded in the shepherd's ear, the message was not of riches, nor pleasures, nor honor, nor health, nor strength, nor beauty, but peace. For the song of the heavenly host was: *Gloria in altissimis Deo, et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis*. Moreover, the Savior saluted men with *Pax vobiscum*. And it was fitting that our Lord and Savior should give to us the highest form of salutation.

If universal peace is one of the great ideals to be realized by man, the object of politics is to procure it; and the remainder of the first book is given to prove that a universal monarchy is the best means to produce the desired end. By piling argument on argument and by appealing to analogy after analogy in typical scholastic fashion, Dante endeavors to show that if the world is governed by one monarch, mankind will be on the road to greatest happiness. Families, villages, townships, kingdoms are governed on monarchical principles; and the arrangement of the whole should be the same as the arrangement of the parts. Again, when

the Son of Man came down into the world, it must have been in its most perfect condition; and the whole world then formed under divine Augustus a single empire and there was universal peace.

Furthermore, Dante argues that a universal monarchy will furnish a means of judgment between the princes of equal rank, will promote justice for the common people, and will encourage freedom. In the tenth chapter of the first book he lays down principles that with but few changes could be turned into an argument for international arbitration. He writes:

Wherever there can be litigation, there must be some means of obtaining a judgment. Between any two rulers one of whom is not subject to the other, there can be no reason for dispute either through their own fault or the fault of their subjects. And in such cases there ought to be a court of appeal. Since one cannot settle the case for the other, for like has no authority over like, there ought to be a third person with greater jurisdiction who may settle the case for both through his superior authority. And this third person will either be the emperor, or not. If it is the emperor, the problem is solved; if not, recourse must be had to a third equal in rank who will have no authority to enforce his decision: and then the matter will still be in litigation.

To Dante's mind it was impossible that two quarreling nations should submit their differences to another nation for decision, and that nations should agree to abide by the decrees of an international court. But he saw very clearly that if justice was to flourish among nations as among individuals, there must be some final means of settling international disputes: he would make his emperor himself to constitute a court of arbitration.

One of Dante's leading tenets is that the emperor is to be just and merciful. The whole system of government is to be freed from despotism. The fiery Florentine who placed the souls of tyrants in a pool of seething blood in the *Inferno* would never have advocated tyranny. The emperor, he says in words akin to those that we are fond of bestowing upon our president, is "without doubt to be regarded as the servant of all mankind and subject to such laws as will increase the public welfare." And he adds a phrase that might well be engraved upon the halls of our legislatures: "For if laws are not made for the advantage of those on whom they are binding, they are laws in name only, and not in reality." The emperor or monarch is then not so much the abso-

lute ruler as the wise administrator of the laws, and a man filled with intense affection for the human race. Whether such a man were ever born does not concern Dante in the least; throughout the essay he is dealing with ideals.¹

Nor is it any part of Dante's scheme that nations should lose their national characteristics. If for the sake of peace and union all are to be subordinated to one central authority, they are nevertheless to retain their ancient habits and regulations.

All nations, kingdoms, and countries [he says] have their own special characteristics and need to be regulated by special laws. One mode of life is suited to the Scythians who dwell far away amid the rigors of intolerable cold; another mode of life befits the Garamantes whose habitation is near the equator. And therefore it is to be understood that the monarch is to govern the nations in accordance with those universal laws to which all are subject and by means of general rules and directions to guide them in the way of peace.

Yet if the nations are thus to keep their own characteristics, Dante is no less sure than Virgil that the dominion over the other countries of the world belongs by right and by divine decree to the Roman people; in other words, to the Holy Roman Empire. The second book of the *De monarchia* is occupied with this proposition. To his own satisfaction, and doubtless to that of his contemporaries, Dante shows that the Romans were the noblest of peoples. Aeneas, the founder of the race, came of kingly and divine parentage; and his claims to universality are substantiated on the ground that he had three wives: one, Creusa in Asia; another, Dido, in Africa; and a third, Lavinia, in Europe. Furthermore, the Roman people have been successful rulers; and on that pragmatic ground Dante justifies their sway. To prove that the Romans were the agents for creating a universal monarchy, Dante quotes the great lines from Virgil, beginning: "Excudent alii spirantia mollius aera." Finally he asserts that when Christ suffered death upon the cross, unless his punishment had been valid—that is, inflicted by duly constituted authority—there could have been no redemption. Since Christ was crucified at the hands of the Romans, the Roman authority was founded on

¹The Stanhope Prize Essay for 1878, *The Political Theories of Dante*, by A. E. Haigh, expounds the poet's views on these subjects admirably.

rightful claims. "And now, I take it, it has been sufficiently shown that the Roman people acquired to itself the empire of the world by right." It is in this insistence on the restoration of the Roman empire that Dante's system breaks down. There is no question but that he wished to restore Italy to what he regarded as her rightful place among the nations. That the emperor of his day was a German was to him a minor consideration. Dante, with his intense love for order and his ardent patriotism, may well be excused for dreaming that all the nations of the world should again be grouped in submission under the central authority of Rome and be resting in peace beneath her banners; but such a picture history proved was to be but a baseless fabric of a vision.

Dante's plea for a universal empire is in many ways fanciful and ideal. Yet it was based on a firm conviction that peace is a great blessing, and it was carried out with much intellectual vigor. To many people the poet seems such a stern, uncompromising soul that the gentler side of his work is often overlooked. It may be a surprise to know that in the *Divine Comedy*, *pace* is one of the favorite words, occurring five times only in the *Inferno*, but seventeen times in the *Purgatorio* and fourteen times in the *Paradiso*. It occurs in two of the loveliest lines of the poem,

Evenni dal martiro a questa pace (Par. XV, 148);

and

E la sua volantate e nostra pace (Par. III, 85).

But Dante does not associate the word solely with heaven. His whole theory of politics looked to the giving of peace to the world; and when he felt that the church was hindering the cause of peace and fostering factional strife, he directed his attack against her so successfully that she replied by placing the *De monarchia* on the Index. It is well to recall the bitterness with which the essay was received, because it shows that the strangely reasoned and quaintly argued theories were to the churchmen of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries very live issues.

In the present discussion of arbitration and peace there are doubtless many phases of the subject which Virgil and Dante in their day and generation could not have foreseen. To the Roman who regarded all other races as inferior and to the Florentine

who could only dream afar off of a unified Italy, any sort of co-operation between nations without conquest and force of arms would have been impossible. And yet the ideals of Dante and of Virgil should not be dismissed without the thought that they too were working for peace and for the happiness of mankind. If Virgil believed that he saw in the new empire earnest of the real return of the Golden Age, he may well be pardoned for believing that it was Rome's duty first to give the world the benefits of conquest, and then the blessings of civilization and tranquillity. If Dante was advocating a system in which the ties of country should be merged in zeal for the happiness of humanity, the quaintness of his mediaeval arguments in behalf of the survival of the supremacy of Rome nevertheless conceals much grandeur and nobility. Today the swords of the Caesars are rust; and the Holy Roman Empire is but a name. But men are still dreaming of, and hoping for, the days when

The battle sound
Will be forgot. . . . The dreadful gates
Whence issueth war shall with close jointed steel
Be barred impregnably.

And apparently the conviction is growing stronger every year that, to use Dante's own words, "of all the blessings that are ordained for the use of mankind the best is universal peace."